

## PRIMARY AND GENERAL ELECTIONS WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

**Narrowing the field of candidates...**

### **Primary Elections**

A Primary Election is a **nominating election** in which voters in each political party choose the nominee who will run against the other political parties' nominees in the General Election. For example, Republicans run against other Republicans and Democrats run against other Democrats for their respective party's nomination. For a list of qualified political parties, please visit our web site at: [http://www.ss.ca.gov/elections/elections\\_f.htm](http://www.ss.ca.gov/elections/elections_f.htm).

California has adopted a Modified Closed Primary system which restricts voters affiliated with a political party to the choice of candidates of that political party. Under California law, political parties may determine whether to allow non-partisan voters (who declined to state a political party affiliation when they registered to vote) the opportunity to cast a ballot for their party's candidates.

For the March 2, 2004 Primary Election, the Democratic, Republican and American Independent parties allowed non-partisan "cross over voting." The Green, Libertarian, Peace and Freedom, and Natural Law parties prohibited non-partisan participation. For additional Decline to State party information, please visit our web site at: [http://www.ss.ca.gov/elections/elections\\_decline.htm](http://www.ss.ca.gov/elections/elections_decline.htm)

**Sending them to office...**

### **General Elections**

A General Election is held for voters to choose among the candidates nominated in a primary election for federal, state and local offices. The purpose of a general election is to make a **final choice** among the candidates nominated at the previous Primary Election.

**What to expect at the polls...**

### **Primary Elections**

Once you arrive at your neighborhood polling place, a pollworker will give you the party ballot for the party you registered with (each is designated by a different color). This ballot must be voted in the booth containing the ballot choices for that party. Each non-partisan voter receives a non-partisan (NP) ballot. If a non-partisan voter chooses to cast votes for a political party that allows "cross over voting," he or she will vote in the booth for that political party.

## General Elections

All voters at the assigned voting precinct vote the same ballot regardless of party affiliation. Voters select from among the candidates of the various political parties.

To volunteer as a pollworker, please visit our web site at:

<http://www.ss.ca.gov/elections/pollworker.htm>

For polling place location, please visit our web site (within two weeks prior to a statewide election) at: [http://www.ss.ca.gov/elections/elections\\_ppl.htm](http://www.ss.ca.gov/elections/elections_ppl.htm) or obtain contact information for your local county election office at: [http://www.ss.ca.gov/elections/elections\\_d.htm](http://www.ss.ca.gov/elections/elections_d.htm)